

*The Use and Importance of Music in the  
Sacrifice of Thanksgiving.*

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693.e.4

# S E R M O N

Preach'd at

*W O R C E S T E R,*

September 3, 1746.

AT THE  
ANNIVERSARY MEETING  
OF THE  
THREE CHOIRS,  
*Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester.*

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By T. MORELL, D. D.  
Rector of *Buckland* in *Hertfordshire.*

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L O N D O N:

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sit ut quodcumque locutus esset ut ap-  
pellebatur ut esset

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III

# DEDICATION

To the Right Reverend Father in God  
I S A A C,  
Lord Bishop of WORCESTER.

My L O R D,

To the Permission of inscrib-  
ing this Discourse to your  
Lordship, I must further  
beg your Indulgence, to look upon  
it as calculated, rather for the Pulpit,  
than for the Press. It requires an  
extraordinary Talent, given but to  
few, to none in larger Measure than  
to your Lordship, to make a Dis-  
course of this kind as agreeable and  
affecting to the Reader as to the  
Hearer,----Suffice it for me, to have  
joined

## DEDICATION.

joined my poor Endeavours, with those of your Lordship, and the Gentlemen Subscribers, in carrying on so great and good a Work, a Work of truly Christian Love! --- to find, that the charitable Contributions, supposed, in part, to be raised hereby, answered all Expectation; --- and to have the Honour of subscribing myself,

*My Lord,*

*Your Lordship's*

*Most dutiful, and*

*Most obliged Servant,*

T. MORELL.

## PSAL. cvii. 31, 32.

*O that Men would praise the Lord for his Goodness, and his wonderful Works to the Children of Men; and let them sacrifice the Sacrifices of Thanksgivings and declare his Works with Rejoicings or (according to the Hebrew) with Singing.*

AMONG other great and valuable Blessings, which we owe entirely, or in part, to the Christian Dispensation, none seems more worthy our grateful Regard, than the inward Joy and Satisfaction that arises from Obedience to the Precepts, and Belief in the Promises, of the Gospel. We have happily experienced what the *Psalmist* said in Spirit, *Light is sprung up for the Righteous, and joyful Gladness for the true hearted* \*. Joy is the peculiar Privilege of innocent and happy Creatures: And whoever, but with his best

\* *Psal. xcvi. 18.*

Endeavours, lives up to the Precepts of Christianity, cannot but be innocent ; who-ever believes its Promises cannot but be happy. Joy is likewise essential to *Thanksgiving*, that truly religious Sacrifice ! and therefore is so far from being prohibited, so far from being e'en restrained by Religion, that, while it springs from, and proceeds upon a Principle of Religion, a more noble and generous Passion cannot enter the Heart of Man : Nor is there any Fear of Excess, since there is no Altitude it can *then* reach, but what becomes the Christian.—Now, *private Joy*, or the Satisfaction a Man feels in his own Breast, may content itself with silent Raptures, and the secret Approbation of the Will of God, in his Conduct towards Man : And this may be looked upon as *an implicit Praise and Thanksgiving to Providence under all Dispensations*. But *public Joy*, or Gratitude to the Almighty for general Blessings, *his wonderful Works to the Children of Men*, cannot otherwise, or more decently be express'd, than by public Praise ; that is, by *their going up to the House of the Lord, and with one Heart, and one Voice glorifying God in the great Congregation*. And this I take to be, in some Measure, the Design of our solemn Assembly : Because, as we are met *here principally to worship God*,

God, I know no higher Act of Adoration and Worship, than, with grateful and devout Minds, to acknowledge his Goodness; with cheerful and benevolent Hearts, to shew forth all his Praise.—Other secondary Views shall have their Place in my Discourse, but this demands the first, *the Praise of God.*—Trite, indeed, the Subject, but exceeding copious: So copious, that the Tongues of Angels cannot exhaust it in Eternity! The *Goodness of God* is still supplying both them and us with new Matter of Praise, in the Works of Nature, Providence, and Grace.—Well then may I venture to enlarge upon the Words before us; Words which the Royal *Psalmist* hath made the Chorus (or Burden, as we say,) of an exalted Song, that stands second to no human Composition. Some Particulars of it we shall consider *in passing*, while we endeavour to shew,

*1st.* What we are to understand by the *Goodness of the Lord.*

*2dly,* The Duty of Praise, in Consequence of the Relation we bear to such Goodness: And this will bring us,

*3dly,* To the most acceptable *Sacrifice of Thanksgiving*, or the best Manner of performing

performing this Duty.—Were it not implied in my Text, I doubt not but your own Thoughts would prevent me, in supposing it to be, by *Music*, both vocal and instrumental.

*First.*—But what do I design? Finite Creature, as I am, to describe the infinite *Goodness of God*? Impossible: The best learned must fail in the Attempt, much more the meanest, O Lord, of thy Servants. However, with awful Reverence we say, that, from the Sense or Consciousness of human Frailty; from the natural Dependency and Imperfection of all created Beings; but especially from the divine Word of Truth, it is manifest, *There is none good, but one, that is God* \*.—And such the whole Church throughout the World doth acknowledge thee, O God: O God, most high, *essentially*, and in thyself good.

But as the Sun, however beautiful and worthy Admiration, would not be so universally magnify'd, were it not that Men enjoy'd the salutary Effects of his Light and Heat; so the *essential* Excellencies of God, all perfect as they are, would not be suf-

\* *Mattb.* xix. 17.

ficient for *universal Praise*, did we not consider them likewise as *relative* to his Works, and beneficial to his Creatures. It is in this Sense, therefore, that the *Psalmist*, contemplating the Divine Nature, generally considers the *Goodness of the Lord*, as an *unalterable Disposition to do and communicate all that Good to his Creatures that is subservient to their different Capacities, and answerable to all the possible Improvements of them*.—I do not love to hear that insolent Particle, *must*, applied to God, after the Manner of those, who dare measure the Deity by human Conceptions: Nor can I well conceive, how any thing, *ad extra*, can bind, or oblige the *Supreme Cause*. Without haranguing, therefore, in the Metaphysician's Style, on the *Fitness* of this providential Goodness, I shall content myself with the humble Ejaculations of the inspir'd *Psalmist*; *How great is his Goodness!*—*How great is his Beauty!*—*And his Ways past finding out!*—Again, in *Ps. xxxiv. 8.* he calls upon Man, be his Condition what it will, *to taste, and see, that the Lord is good.*—To taste? That is, to think, to commune with his own Heart, to examine the Trials and Proofs that God hath given him. And what Man so stupid, so immers'd in more than brutish Insensibility, as

not to acknowledge *the Goodness of the Lord?*—*I think, and therefore I am.*—But to whom, or to what Power do I principally owe my Existence? To whom am I oblig'd for the Foundation of all Enjoyment; since, in order to be happy, (if happy, that is, content,) I must first *be?* Who then hath rais'd me from the dark Gulph of Non-existence, and planted me, an intelligent Creature, in these lightsome Realms? Who is it that still *upholds my Goings, that my Foot-steps slip not;* that I fall not into the thousand ever-open Mouths of Death? Or, who is it, that not only sustaineth me in Life, but hath stored all Nature with Provisions for my Use and Comfort?—These, and the like Reflections, (rather, indeed, to be entertained in the Secrecy of Devotion, and in the Silence of the Soul, than to be express'd by Words) cannot but lead the *thinking Man* to a Sense of God's Goodness. The Man that thinks, and is devout, (as devout he will be, if he thinks aright,) does not only *believe,* but *feel a Deity.* In the first and faint Discoveries of divine Perfections, he sees every thing he can imagine, as great, wonderful, and lovely; and then turning his Eye inward upon human Frailty, he acknowledges himself every where upheld by Almighty Goodness,

Goodness, and surrounded with an Immensity of Love and Mercy.—I might exemplify this in the Psalmist, who, if any one, was truly full of the Goodness of the Lord; and therefore, not content with saying in general, *The Lord is good to All*, hath enumerated several Particulars; some of which I shall mention from the Context, and leave to yourselves the Application.—Such as sat in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, being bound in Affliction and Iron, when they cried unto the Lord, he delivered them in their Distress.—To those whose Souls abhorred all Manner of Meat, and they drew near unto the Gates of Death, hath he sent his Word, and healed them; yea, he delivered them from their Destructions.—And when the Souls of hardy Mariners have been melted because of Trouble, and all their Wisdom swallowed up by the raging Deep; God hath commanded the Storm to cease, and brought them to the desired Haven.—O that Men would therefore praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men.—Again, are they punished and brought low through any Plague or Trouble, He poureth Contempt upon Princes, and maketh them wander in the Wilderness, where there is no Way.—The Righteous shall see this, and rejoice, and all Iniquity shall

*shall stop her Mouth.—Who so is wise will ponder these Things, and he shall understand the Goodness of the Lord.*

Thus the *Psalmist*.—And indeed we might go on, through the Whole of his divine Compositions, without quitting our Subject, or expecting to find a Shore to this immense Ocean, *the Goodness of the Lord*. Suffice it, therefore, to have touch'd upon the wonderful Exertion of it, in the Creation and Preservation of Man, without launching out into that more amazing Work, the everlasting Scheme of his Redemption, by *Jesus Christ*. In whom, *tho' now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory; receiving the End of your Faith, even the Salvation of your Souls* \*. If then,

2dly, We, and all Things, entirely depend upon the *Goodness of God*, for our Being and Preservation; If every Blessing, every Enjoyment, all our Successes, and wonderful Deliverances, are the indisputable Result of God's Goodness; *what Return shall we make unto the Lord for these his Benefits?* What Return *can* we make, but by

\* *1 Pet. i. 8.*

*offering*

offering up the Sacrifices of Thanksgiving,  
and telling out his Works with Gladness. O  
give Thanks unto the Lord, for he is good.  
Praise him, for his Mercy endureth for ever ;  
let the Redeemed of the Lord say so ; yea,  
let us say so, whom he hath redeemed from the  
Hand of the Enemy.

Now, to praise God, is to confess with Admiration the infinite Perfections of his Attributes, to contemplate his wonderful Works, and join in Consort with the whole Creation in magnifying our universal Parent. God created the World, and all that is therein, for his own Glory. The vegetative and irrational Part stand as so many Instances of his almighty Power and Providence, and herein they praise him. The animal Part, and all that have Breath, in their Perfection likewise praise the Lord. But Man

— induced  
With Sanctity of Reason, and from thence  
Magnanimous to correspond with Heav'n,

stands, as it were, the Priest of the visible Creation, in the great Temple of the World, *to sacrifice*, for the Whole, the

*Sacrifices of Thanksgiving, and praise the Lord with Understanding \*.*

And thus to *praise God*, is to fulfil one of the prime Laws of Nature. It is a beautiful Act of Justice, which all Nations, however barbarous esteemed, or mistaken in the Object of Worship, have been ever sensible of, and more than inclined to perform. Witness among the *Egyptians, Persians, Indians, Scythians*, and others, the grateful Inscriptions on the Altars of their Gods, the costly Sacrifices, and especially their sublime Hymns and Songs of Praise. It is the Glory of a rational Soul, the Glory of the tuneful Tongue, to discharge a Debt, which though we are ever paying, and can never pay, is yet our *reasonable Service*. Nay, it is the highest and noblest Act of religious Worship; being *that* which throws off all the little Concerns of Self, and enwraps the whole Mind in the Contemplation of God. It was the first, because the only Act, by which Man could express his Homage, before the Fall in Paradise; and

\* *Omnia precantur, Hymnosque concinunt, ad ordinis sui ducem; alia, intellectuali modo; alia, rationali; alia, sensitivo, alia naturali.* Procl. de Sacrific. p. 275.

—*Deo etiam inanimalia et incorporalia laudes canunt.* Tertull. Contr. Herm. c. 44.

shall be the last, at his Restoration in Heaven ; because the only or chief Employ of the blessed Saints, in the everlasting Realms of Light and Joy.

Add to this, the Will, or Command of our Almighty Benefactor. He hath frequently in his holy Word, especially in the *Psalms*, inform'd us, that *Praise* is the most acceptable Return his Creatures can make, for the infinite Blessings they enjoy \*. Who then can doubt, but that *Praise* is an indispensible Duty, a Duty of eternal Obligation ? But why say I *Duty* ? We ought rather to look upon it as a peculiar Privilege, additional Felicity, that *He who humbleth himself to behold the Things that are in Heaven*, should, with still more amazing Condescension, stoop to receive the *Calves of our Lips*, and annex a Blessing to so worthless a Sacrifice ! That *He, whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, should take Delight to inhabit the Praises of his People* †. Glorious Privilege ! angelic Happiness ! if we forfeit, or lose it not, by praising God with feigned

\* *Deut.* x. 20, 21. 1 *Chron.* xvi. 8. *Neb.* ix. 5. *Pf.* 1. 23. li. 15. lvi. 12. cii. 18, 21. cxvi. 11. cxlviii. 11. xlvi. 10. lxi. 11. *Jer.* xvii. 26. *Joel* ii. 26. *Luke* xix. 37. *John* ii. 26. *Rev.* xix. 5.

† *Psal.* xxii. 3. cxiii. 6. 1 *Kin.* viii. 27.

*Lips, or a sinful Heart.—Praise is unseemly in the Mouth of a Sinner; and then only, when it is utter'd in Wisdom, will the Lord prosper it \*.* Then only when it proceeds from Love and Thankfulness, will it cherish and improve the Principle it proceeds from; sanctify it in the Soul, and give it its proper Value: Then only is it rightly and fully employ'd, when employ'd upon God; when abhorrent of all mean and flattering Addresses to mortal Man, it sets the Faculties upon the Stretch, and capacitates them for the Reception of the most glorious Object, *the immortal King of Heaven*: And then only speaketh it its proper Language, when, in the triumphant Songs of Love and Joy, it exalteth the *Goodness of the Lord*; and moreover, in order to raise and animate this Language, calleth to its Aid the important Melody of *instrumental Musick*.—*This was made a Statute for Israel, and a Law of the God of Jacob* †. And no doubt, but the same God, and Father of us all, will accept, will be well pleased with *the like Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving* on this our *solemn Feast-Day*: It being that, which hath its Foundation in

\* *Eccl. xvi. 7, 8.*

† *Numb. x. 10. P. lxxi. 1.*

Reason, is enjoin'd by *Revelation*, and confirm'd by the Practice of almost all Ages and Nations of the World; *to sacrifice the Sacrifices of Thanksgiving, and declare the Works of the Lord with Singing.*

Now, to illustrate this Point, (for it rather wants Illustration than Proof) was my third Engagement.

But what shall I say? There is, indeed, a Beauty in some Writers of the finest Taste, which, on this Occasion, I fain would imitate; I mean that of making the Expression correspond with the Subject, and the Sound, as it were, an Echo to the Sense. But how shall I model this rough monosyllabic Language of ours to a Numerousness that may suit the delightful Theme? How shall I dispose the unequally-matched Vowels and Consonants, Mutes and Liquids, so as to conceal the Inequality, and make the Flow agreeable to a judicious Ear? How shall I raise the tumid Emphasis, or drop each humble Cadence, with an expressive Grace? How shall I tune my prosaic Measure (for Prose hath Measure, if haply I could attain it) to give no Distaste to so polite a Circle? Methinks it was not less Presumption in the Philosopher, to read a

Lecture

Lecture of War before *Hannibal*, than for me to descant on Music before such unrivalled Masters of Harmony.—But as a Preacher only stand I here ; and therefore, without entering upon the Grounds, or pretending to penetrate into the Depths of Music ; without *weighing it in a Scale*, (as the comic Poet expresseth himself\*) or being sollicitous after melodious Composition, (*quanquam O !*) I shall lay out my best Endeavours, in a sort of *planus cantus*, to shew

That the Use of Music, both vocal and instrumental, in religious Worship, particularly in the *Sacrifice of Praise*, hath its Foundation in Reason.

There is a Propensity in the Mind of Man (of all Men unstupified by atheistical Diffidence) to some kind of Worship or other. If distressful his Condition, and the World, as usual, forsakes him ; where shall he fly for Succour, but to some superior Being ; to whom in Prayer *he may make his Requests known*, and ease the burthen'd Soul, if it were but with the soft Smiles of Hope ? Or if blest with some sudden unexpected

\* *Aristoph. Ran. Act. 3. Sc. 1.*

Good, with the like Tendency it is carried, to pay the Tribute of *Gratitude and Praise*. To whom? To whom only it is due, the invisible Superintendent of the World. Hence that great Article of Adoration, and those devotional Acts, in which all Nations under Heaven seem to concur. Now, if there be any Means of expressing these Acts, particularly that of Praise, in a more strong and lively Manner; if there be any Powers in Art, or Nature, that can raise our Devotion to a more seraphic Pitch; surely nothing can be more reasonable than the Use of such Means; nothing more requisite, than to call in such Powers to our Assistance.

Let us try then what vocal and instrumental Harmony can do? And what can it not do?—*Take the Psalm, bring hither the Tabret, the merry Harp, with the Lute; sing together, and make a cheerful Noise to the God of Jacob*\*.—And what Constitution so cold and phlegmatic, as not to be warm'd therewith? What Ear so dull by Nature, or Prejudice, as not to be mov'd, and delighted, even against the Will? What

\* 2 Sam. xix. 35.

Heart so dead to all Entertainment, as not to dance with correspondent Joy \*.

It may be there are some, who, by a *connatural secondary Kind of Deafness*, as it is called, can no more hear *the Voice of Singing-men and Singing-women*, than the unobserving Ear of *Barzillai* †, when four-score Years had unstrung its Fibres. Unhappy Persons! not, indeed, to be disinherited, as *Varro* ‡ would have them, but to be pitied, as wanting a whole Sense, in Comparison of those, whose Delight in Music is above all sensible Enjoyments. *Baxter* himself goes farther, and calls them but *Half-men*.—Others there are, who, from Affectation, surly Pride, Prejudice, or I know not what, fly the Fields of Gladness, and stop their tasteless Ears to the Charms of joyous Harmony.—Let them

\* *Nullum est tam immite, tam asperum pectus, quod non oblectamentorum talium teneatur affectu.* *Macrob. de somn. Scip. l. 2. c. 3.*

† *In Satyra Varronis que inscribitur, Testamentum, legimus verba hæc, Si quis mihi Filius, unus pluresve in decem mensibus genuntur; si si erunt ὄντες Λύρας exheredes suntο—A. Gell. l. 3. c. 16. ὄντες λύρας appellat indociles bonarum artium, atque intractabiles.* *Erasm. Adag.*

‡ See the Treatise which he wrote professedly in justification of the Lawfulness of Music in the Service of God. See also his five Disputations, p. 112. and Cases of Conscience, Qu. 127. *Newte's Serm.*

go.—

go.—*Nihil Graculo cum Fidibus* \*.—But far more wretched, far more inexcusable are they, whose Disrelish of sacred Harmony proceeds from a wicked Heart; an Heart dissonant and tumultuous, not merely from a natural, but a judicial Cause. They will not hear; or if they hear, like *Saul*, they tremble and are disquieted at the Sound of *Things divine*. They have forsaken God, and God, who alone gives Music its Authority and Influence on the Soul, hath forsaken them.—It is of these, if any, the Heathen Poet said, *God loves not the Man who loves not Music*. And our own more emphatically,

—*Having not Music in their Souls,  
They are not mov'd with Concord of sweet  
Sounds :*

*Men! fit for Treasons* †.—

Or any thing else, that may turn the hat-

\* *A. Gell. Atticarum extremâ lucubratione sancè quam ele-  
ganter hoc adagium torquet in quosdam pinguiore ingenio homi-  
nes stolidâque loquacitate præditos, à quo, i. e. à Musarum  
sacris alienos, qui politiores literas elegantioreneque doctrinam  
vel ridere possunt, vel etiam contemnere, intelligere nequaquam  
possunt; quos ea demum juvant, quæ ipsi scilicet didicerunt,  
sordida, muta, indecta. Erasm. Adag.*

† Shakespeare.

monious Order of Things to Disorder and Confusion \*.

But at a Banquet of Harmony, Love, and Joy, it is not proper for me to disturb the Guests with any heterogeneous Matter of Cavil and Dispute ; so, no more at present concerning those that are without ; only let me observe, that Objections drawn from the like Defects, Distortions, and Depravations of human Nature, against the Utility of Music in *Divine Service*, are of no more Weight with reasonable Men, than Objections drawn from antient Heresies, or modern Whims, against the everlasting Truths of Christianity ; or from the Production of a Monster, against the Laws of Nature, or settled Course of Things.

Having thus briefly clear'd the Way, I shall the more easily run an uninterrupted Descant upon divine Music ; which I chuse to do, rather than trouble you with what might seem a needless Vindication.

To know Music, is to know the natural Order of Things : For all Nature, or the

\* As was fully experienced in the last Century.

Universe, is perfect Harmony\*. And when it hath pleased God to change even the Nature of the Elements, (as in the Plagues of Egypt, *Wisd.* xix. 18.) it was but like the flinging in a Discord, which, being judiciously resolved, made the Harmony more complete. Now, seeing that *every Like is delighted with its Like*, every thing endued with a living and sensible Spirit naturally delights in Harmony. I might give Instances of this in the Fowls of the Air, the Beasts of the Field, the Fishes of the Sea, and in many Insects, volitant and reptile; but they are common to every one's Observation. Look we then on Man, on Man, whose Soul is truly musical †: Prompted by some antient Philosophers, I had almost called it Harmony itself †. - To Man God hath given not only a Delight in, and secret Propensity to, Song and Harmony; but wonderful Abilities, to perform it in all its Parts. How sweet and tuneable is the Modulation of his Voice? A Voice more sweet

\* *Natura est perfectissima Harmonia.* Max. Tyr. Serm. 27. Πάθει γόρας ὁ Σάσιος τὸν τὸν πανὸς οὐσίαν διὰ μεσοκῆς αποφαίνει συγχύμενον. Athen. l. 14.

† *Anima est Musice Alumna.* Max. Tyr. Serm. 21.

‡ *Lacr. l. 3. 101. Animam esse Harmoniam, aut babere Harmoniam.* Cic. Tusc. l.

than what all the Powers of Art could ever excell or imitate. Yet sweet and melodious as the human Voice is, it cannot alone express the strong Sentiments of the Soul, when in its devotional Ascent to Heaven it has something astonishingly great in view. Feeble are its utmost Efforts *to shew forth the Praise of God*; something more is wanting than a *light Flexion of Voice, naked, and unimproved*, to declare *the wonderful Works of God for the Children of Men*. The Soul still labours after higher Transports; still panteth to magnify God, and his Goodness, in a more exalted Strain, *and make his Praise glorious*; and not only desireth to bless God with greater Fervency and Elevation, but also in more grateful Terms to speak her own Felicity and Joy.—Sensible of this from the Beginning, and, no doubt, inspired by God himself, hath the pious and devout Soul call'd in the Melody of Instruments, to indulge the Voice with Variety, fill it up with Extent, and strengthen it with Continuity; and thereby enable her to express her rapturous Admiration with a more sublime and heavenly Pathos. For why? *Music* applied to Objects of Passion, serves to embellish and aggrandize them, and make them enter, with a Pleasure unknown before, into the

the very Recesses of the Soul \*. It raises noble Hints, and opens the Mind to great Conceptions; furnishing it with a new Capacity, as well as a new Opportunity of Satisfaction. But above all, it qualifies the Heart to receive the Influence of this important Consideration; we therein feel a lively Sense of God's Goodness, and are taught to thank him for this, among other Instances of his loving Kindness; this, one of the greatest Felicities of human Nature, a *melodious Constitution*.

Seeing, then, that Music seizeth irresistibly upon the Affections, and, when duly attended to, can raise, and still govern the Passions, with an almost arbitrary Sway †; who can doubt the Utility of it in religious Worship? Indeed, so subservient it seems to all the Purposes of Religion, and particularly to the *Sacrifice of Praise*, that *Religion*, at least this Part of it, can never be full and strong without it. For whether it be by the Suggestions of an invisible Enemy to all

\* Τέτων, ἕπικα κυριωτάτην ἐν μετικῇ τροφῇ, ὅτι μάλιστα καλαδέσεις  
ικός τὸ ἐνδέος τῆς Φυχῆς ὁ, τε ρυθμὸς καὶ ἀρμονία, καὶ ἐξωμετόλατος  
ἀπίσταται αὐτῆς, καὶ ποιεῖ εὐσχήμονα, εάν τις ὄρθως τραφῇ. Plat. Pol. 3.

† *Omnis Animus habitus cantibus gubernatur.* Macrob. de Somn. Scip. l. 2. c. 3.

\* Εοίκασιν ἐν οἷς πολλοῖς τὴν ἐπιστήμην μετικῆς ἀποδίδονται ταῖς  
οὐσίαις ἐπανορθώσις χαρεῖν καὶ ὀφελεῖται. Athen. l. 14.

Goodness,

Goodness, or the Listlessness of our own corrupt Nature, the best of Men, I believe, in their devotional Hours, suffer their Minds sometimes to wander and be distracted from the holy Work; at other Times, to be sluggish, inactive, and scarce awake. Now, what, like *Music*, can keep them steady and attentive? What can raise them to that divine Enthusiasm which is natural to Devotion, like *Instruments of Praise*, I would say of *God*? Let the united Force of them all, I mean the Organ only, strike up an Alarm; how swiftly do the straggling *Thoughts return to Duty*? Or, should one of them lag behind to indulge Nature awhile, though at another Time, perhaps, faultless and innocent, with what Scorn is it now rejected and expelled, like the Tone, or Semitone, which dares intrude upon a Chord that disowns its Company?

But add Sense to the Sound: Let the *Terrors of the Lord* be described with expressive Melody; how strongly is the Soul affected with a deep Sense of his Greatness, and awed into religious Veneration! Or let the *Goodness of the Lord, and his wonderful Works to the Children of Men*, be aloud declared with harmonious Joy; how is the Soul rap'd above itself, till it catches the

Flame

Flame of Heaven ! We are all Love and Gratitude.—And thus does Music endear to us all the Offices of Religion ; and, like Gratitude itself, is sufficiently rewarded in the Satisfaction of Performance. But it dies not here ; so extensive is the Power of Harmony, that it calls in those, who have no Abilities to perform, nay, even those *whose Hearts were not ready*, to partake of the divine Pleasure. It composes their Minds into Attention, and enamours them with *the Beauty of Holiness*. They are deceiv'd, as it were, into Piety ; and if the goodly Motion be not check'd, it will make such lasting Impressions, as having made them fit for, shall attend them to the Choir of Heaven.—Seem we not there already ?—*How pleasingly dreadful is this Place ! Surely this is none other but the House of God* \* !

Many other Arguments have been brought by my learned and ingenious Predecessors in this Province ; many other Arguments could we bring, to prove the Expediency of Music, both vocal and instrumental, in solemnizing the Praise of God ; though, indeed, we scarce know any thing more manifest to prove it by, than it is itself, as we have this

\* Gen. xxix. 17.

Day experienced.—I had it in my Design to draw together the several and better Directions in this Matter, which we find scatter'd throughout the *Old Testament*, and to connect, as we went along, the Practice of the Gentile World; and from thence, likewise, to set before you the Example of Christ, his Apostles, and Followers, so far as they delighted in, and practic'd *divine Psalmody*; that so we might add to the above Hints, drawn from Reason and Experience, the indisputable Authority of Divine Revelation, and confirm them by Antiquity, and the Custom of almost all Ages and Nations of the World. But this would only have encreased my Trespass upon your Patience. For the present, therefore, I shall conclude this Head with a short Encomium.

—O Harmony! sacred Harmony! Saints, the greatest Saints upon Earth have enjoy'd in thee a rational Pleasure: Prophets, the goodly Fellowship of God's own Prophets have experienced thy divine Influence: Angels, as far as we are permitted to know of Angels, make thee their Employ, and God himself is pleased to accept the Entertainment.

Having now illustrated the three Points under Consideration, *The Goodness of God, the*

the consequent Duty of Praise, and the Usefulness of Music in solemnizing the same, I shall, as briefly as may be, apply them to the particular Adjuncts of this Assembly, *Charity, Love, and Joy*. *qui vobis nois dicitur in vobis regni* *habet* *et* *est* *in vobis*. *First*, Let us lift up our Minds to that great God who is Goodness itself, and recognize him in the Plenitude of his almighty Power. And yet, even this would not be sufficient; as before observ'd, for universal Praise, did we not take likewise into our Consideration the Compass of his Providence, the beneficial Effects of his Goodness, and his wonderful Works to the Children of Men. Here then we fix, and say, God is absolutely good, because universally beneficent. And if all Virtue (as Plato, or Reason saith) consists in our copying from this great Original; how readily, how chearfully must they, *who eat the Fat, and drink the Sweet*, if they have any Virtue, if they have any Sense of God's Goodness, *send a Portion to those for whom nothing is prepared* \*? It is impossible, but that they, who are conscious of the superlative Excellencies of God, and his infinite Goodness towards them, should be eager and impa-

\* *Nebem. viii.*

tient to do something, in Acknowledgment of his Attributes, and to testify the lively Sense they have of his Bounty towards them. It is impossible but that they, who with Satisfaction enjoy the good Things of this Life, and hope for a blessed Immortality in the Life to come, should survey all about them with a Flow of Good-will. And where can it spread itself more effectually? Where can their Gratitude be return'd more acceptably, than in ministering to the crying Wants of the Distressed, the destitute Widow, and poor friendless Orphan? This, indeed, is to resemble Gbd in the loveliest of his Perfections. This is to act like Persons created in his Image, and after his Likeness. *For He delivereth the Needy when he crieth; the Poor also, and him that hath no Helper \**. Delivereth them? how? Not miraculously, or with his own immediate Power; but by the Directions of his holy Word, the Impulses of Nature, and the Inspirations of Grace, to all well-disposed Persons, (to all, I hope, here present,) to be merciful after their Power; if they have much, to give plentifully; if they have little, to do their Diligence gladly to give of that little. And this is pure Religion, to visit

*the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction :*  
And this is the truest Wisdom ; for so gather they to themselves a good Reward \*.

Believe ye not these Truths, my Brethren ? I am persuaded ye believe them ; and have at Heart whatever else might be urg'd from Reason, or the infallible Oracles of Revelation, in the Name of Charity. But indulge me, for Charity's Sake, with one Argument more, however common.— Where human Nature is not prejudic'd, or corrupted, it is a natural Dictate ; and where the Gospel hath been preached, it is the very Badge of Christianity, to be ever ready to relieve the Poor and Needy. But there is something so peculiarly afflicting in the Distresses of those, whose Cause I am pleading, that *Judaism*, I would say, *Barbarism* itself could not pass them by, with only, *Be ye warmed and filled.*—For, for whom do we plead ? Not for the general Poor, who from their Infancy have been injur'd to Hardships, and, if industrious, are even happy in their Toil ; but for such, as by an unfortunate Change of Circumstances, are subject to Difficulties and Distresses, which they were neither taught to fear, nor pre-

\* *Tob. iv. 8, 9. 7-m. i. 27.*

pared to suffer. I plead for the Widows and Children of the late Ministers of God, who were once their Support and Comfort.—But the Lord hath called them.—They are gone, they are dead, and have left their Families to the cold Care of Charity.—I accuse them not.—It may be, they could not prevent it.—With the utmost Care and Frugality it might have been next to impossible for them to have made a suitable Provision.—Well then may the Widow pour out the Complaint of *Naomi*, and her Children sigh a Gospel-Plea, *We cannot dig.—Have Pity on the Widow, have Pity on the Fatherless, O my Friends, for the Lord hath touched them\**. Have Pity on them for God's Sake, who will not receive the *Terumoth*, or other Gift, at your Hands, unless the Widow and the Orphans partake of it with him †.—Have Pity on them for the Sake of the Church, whose Joy can ne'er be full, while any of the Members mourn and are sore vexed.—Have Pity on them for your own Sakes, for *God is not unrighteous, that he should forget your Work and Labour of Love, which ye have ministered to his Saints, and do minister ‡.*

\* *Job xix. 21.*† *Deut. xxvi.*‡ *Heb. vi. 10.*

2dly, It was never the Design of Providence, that this World should be filled with Murmuring and Repinings ; or that natural Evils should so far prevail, as to involve the Heart of Man in perpetual Gloom and Melancholy. From a deep Sense of God's Power, and the beautiful Prospect of his Goodness display'd around, Persons under all Dispensations may find sufficient Incitements to a *chearful Temper*, and humble Acquiescence in the State wherein they are placed. Hence they will be grateful, grateful to their Benefactors, grateful to their God. For *Chearfulness* is the best Preparation for true Gratitude ; the Mind has gone a great Way towards Praise and Thanksgiving, that is filled with Complacency and inward Joy : It is always in tune, and at proper Opportunities will break forth into holy Raptures, and triumph in the Extasies of Thanksgiving.—*High and low, Rich and Poor, young Men and Maidens, old Men and Children, praise the Name of the Lord, for his Name only is excellent, and his Praise above Heaven and Earth.*—And yet something more is required than this occasional Homage, this Fruit of our Lips ; something more is wanting, (not wanting in you, my Brethren,) to crown this Solemnity, and that is, the *Fruit of good Living.* This is the truest

truest Gratitude we can shew to our infinitely kind Benefactor ; this the Praise he requireth, as a *Sacrifice for his Goodness* ; not that Breath which cools upon the Lip, and vanisheth with a *Lord be praised*, but an Uniformity of Manners as well as Worship ; a constant Tenour of Good-humour and Vivacity (inseparable from Goodness, inseparable from the Love of Music,) which gives a pleasing Air to all our Words and Actions, and sanctifies the Free-will Offering of our Lips, when we meet together, as now, to celebrate the Praise of God. And thus,—thus *let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is, the Fruit of our Lips giving Thanks to his Name.* But (as follows, and what we must still keep our Eye upon,) *to do Good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased* \*. The Administration of this Service not only supplieth the Wants of the Saints, but is abundant also by many *Thanksgivings unto God* †. Yet hear him : *He that offereth me Thanks and Praise, honoureth me indeed : but to him that ordereth his Conversation aright will I shew the Salvation of God* ‡. For,

\* *Heb. xiii. 15, 16.*

† *2 Cor. ix. 12.*

‡ *Psal. 1. 23.*

3dly,

3dly, and lastly, As Music loses all its Force and Beauty, if Time be broke, and no Proportion kept, so is it with Men's Lives.—

If Regularity in the Affections and Passions, and moral Proportion, be not observ'd in all their Actions, strange Dissonancy ensues, and horrid Confusion. Concord and Proportion support universal Nature. But once, more consider Man in himself; examine well the Composition of the human Frame; how exact are the Dimensions of every Part! how just the Proportion and Symmetry of the Whole! In this then consists the Beauty of the Body; that Beauty, which so struck an antient Heathen with Wonder and Admiration, that he stiled it, and stiled it well, *an Hymn to the supreme Being*.—And not less real and exact is the Order and Symmetry of the Soul, whose Beauty consists in the Temperament and Regulation of those Passions and Affections, which constitute the inward Man; and while a Sense of Religion (nothing else can do it) keeps them up to a proper Pitch and due Tone, so as to maintain them in the just Performance of their Part, all is Harmony; and a sweet Concinnity of Life endears the Performer  
both

both to God and Man.—On this likewise depends the Good and Happiness of all Societies, consider'd as such; I mean a decent, regular, and harmonious Exercise of all those natural Affections that are of a social and friendly Sort; such as Love, Gratitude, Good nature, Pity, Succour, and the like.—These, my Brethren, (as you have long experienced in carrying on this your generous Design) are not only the most commendable Affections of the Soul, but are always attended with the pleasing Assent and Approbation of the Mind. Who is there that has been concerned in this good Work, but rejoiceth in the Consciousness and Memory thereof? And what more solid and lasting Entertainment can he enjoy, than in the Contemplation of so beautiful, so well-proportion'd, so God-like an Action?—To conclude: As nothing can open and enlarge the Heart to these divine Offices like the sweet Charms of Music, how commendable is this Anniversary Testimony of fraternal Concord, to advance and propagate Music for the Service of God, and the Exercise of Benignity and Goodness among Men?—Music assimilates the Disposition of the Heart to itself; and therefore I cannot think the Author much mistaken, who took *the delighting in Harmony* to be a moral Sign

*Sign of all Good.* Where the Love of Harmony dwells (O may it ever dwell among us!) the Voice of Hatred and Animosity, the Voice of Malice and Revenge is heard no more! It carries us to the very Borders of the celestial Paradise; and unburthening the Soul of all earthly Cogitations, fills it with the divine Contemplation of the Glory of God, the Beauty of Heaven, and the inexpressible Pleasures there reserved for us. Which God, of his infinite Goodness, grant we may one Day enjoy, and with the blessed Inhabitants harmonious join, like the sweet *Confluence of Chords in an universal Close.*

**F I N I S.**

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